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Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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To CH2MHill, lead agency for scoping the Gateway Pacific Terminal Environmental Impact Statement:

My husband and I currently live on San Juan Island, near Friday Harbor, WA. We are retired scientists who came here to enjoy this beautiful, peaceful place. We share that joy with family and friends who visit and they do all love to visit this special place. We sail, scuba and snorkel in these waters. We eat the seafood pulled from these waters. We get excited every time we see our beloved Southern Resident Orca whales swimming by our shores. My husband and I recently became Beachwatchers through the Washington State University Extension. Through the WSU Beachwatcher program, we spent 100 hours in the classroom and shore side where we were taught about the fragility of this ecosystem. We have now volunteered hundreds of hours in various capacities in our community as payback to the Beachwatcher program. We have worked as Docents at the State Park Interpretive Center and Lighthouse and as maintenance crew for the machinery used at the park. My husband maintains three riding lawn mowers for use on local trails. We mow a County Park during the summer season because it would have closed due to lack of funding. We have both worked at the island wildlife rehabilitation center, caring for animals and equipment. I am currently working on a research project on eel grass with at the local labs from the University of Washington. I am part of a team of people who monitor the invertebrate sea life in our harbor. We also collect water samples and test for contaminants.

Can you tell we love this place and want to see it remain as it is for posterity?

This is why we ask that you include the San Juan Archipelago in the EIS for the proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point, Bellingham and the chief reason we want to be included is to examine the associated impacts of increased vessel traffic. There is much at stake. The numbers of cape-sized ships transiting our waters from Bellingham on the way to Asia will more than double. The potential impacts are many:

1. Many of these transits are in single hulled ships. Please evaluate the risk of having single hulled ships vs double hulled ships in the cases of groundings or collisions with regard to release of coal into the waters or the release of propulsion fuel.
2. Keeping in mind that coal contains not just carbon but heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury, how a coal spill would be mitigated and if release is not mitigated, evaluate the impact on the ecosystems. If the release of coal cannot be mitigated without damage to the ecosystems of the San Juan Archipelago, consider a NO ACTION alternative.
3. What are the impact of heavy metals on our fish, our shellfish, the industries that accompany them and the resulting loss of jobs and wages to contaminated marine harvests? With loss of jobs and wages in the marine food industries the economy of the San Juans would suffer. Please evaluate the impact of loss of marine food dependent jobs on the local economy including decrease in property value and tax revenue. The state receives a revenue stream from a healthy San Juan County economy. Please evaluate the impact on the state economy from a loss of jobs and property values in the county as a result of loss of marine dependent jobs. The harvest of potentially contaminated marine creatures is food for humans. Please evaluate the impact on humans that ingest contaminated seafood.

4. Please evaluate the impact of the release of propulsion fuel in the event of collision or spill of these coal ships. Propulsion fuel is often Bunker C which is heavy, coalescing in our cold waters and would sink to the seafloor to become part of the sediment. Please evaluate what this would do to the ecosystem including fish, fowl and humans. Please evaluate how the release of propulsion fuel and coal would be mitigated in case of a spill and if release is not mitigated, evaluate the impact on the ecosystems.
5. Many of the ships are from foreign ports with crews that do not speak English. We understand that an English speaking pilot is placed on board as these ships enter our waters. However, a ship manned by one of these pilots collided recently in a nearby Canadian port. Please consider having two English speaking pilots on board each vessel for redundancy should one be incapacitated and as a check on the crew and each other's understanding of maneuvers. Please consider requiring that these transport ships be met at the entrance to our passages by two pilot ships and require that they be tethered to the cargo ships to protect our waters.
6. The coal vessels contain ballast water that may originate in foreign ports. While dumping ballast water is usually prohibited, exceptions are made, for instance in heavy seas. Ballast water of foreign origin can often contain species that are considered invasive species because they outcompete and harm or destroy flora and fauna indigenous to our local waters. Please evaluate the potential for invasive species from ships dumping foreign ballast water damaging or destroying our native populations of marine flora and fauna that exist in our ecosystem in delicate balance. Please evaluate the resultant loss of jobs, property values and tax revenues in the case of diminished or lost marine populations that are affected by invasive species.
7. Evaluate the impact of the a spill's destruction of our ocean flora, for example eel grass, the requisite habitat for many species in the food chain, and fauna, the food web that supports our fisheries and shellfish industry. The resident Orca whales are dependent on Chinook salmon whose juveniles inhabit the eel grass pastures
8. Please study the impacts of increased vessel traffic and potential spills on the flora and fauna on the endangered and threatened species lists. Please study the impact of noise from the engines of increased numbers of large ships on the Southern Resident Orca, a species on the endangered list. Please study the impact of a spill on the Columbia Chinook salmon, the main diet of the Southern Resident Orca.
9. Pleasure boating, kayaking touring and whale and marine animal watching tour boats are a large part of our economy in the San Juans. Please study the impact of increased coal vessel traffic on this type of recreational boating in the San Juans. This would also require consideration of the economic impact to the region which depends largely on tourism to sustain jobs here in the recreational boating industry.

Ann and Don Jarrell